

# PRIORITY #1: *Economic Development and Jobs*

## San Juan County Ferry Service Survey

*Survey of 873 San Juan County residents conducted  
by mail March 5-14.*

Should current service levels in both capacity and frequency of ferry service to San Juan County and British Columbia be maintained?

YES 61% NO 39%

Should service to Sydney, B.C. be discontinued if it could mean more capacity but less frequency of service to San Juan County?

YES 14% NO 86%

Another proposal is to retrofit one ferry to meet new Coast Guard safety requirements on international runs. A single ferry could make two trips to Sidney each day and free a second ferry to make the traditional trip ending in Friday Harbor (departing back to Anacortes). This would also cut the capital costs of retrofitting in half. Would you support this concept?

YES 77% NO 23%

Would you support doing the one ferry retrofit mentioned above for a three-year period while options for a public-private partnership ending with a new ferry built for Anacortes to Sidney run managed by a private operator) are pursued? This would eventually return the second boat to the San Juan County inventory, resulting in the extra two boat or one larger boat goal?

YES 71% NO 29%

Would you rather have more auto capacity to the San Juan County or Foot passenger or Both?

AUTO 56% FOOT PASSENGER 15%  
BOTH 28%

Would you support an increase in the state gas tax to pay for new ferry construction?

YES 63% NO 37%

Would you support the inter-island ferry making a stop in Bellingham?

YES 53% NO 47%

Should the ferry terminal in Anacortes be expanded?

YES 14% NO 76%



## **Saving the Anacortes-Sydney Ferry**

Public outcry over a plan to cancel the Anacortes-Sydney, B.C. ferry definitely helped save the ferry and it may lead to more efficient management of the state's only international ferry run. The state Transportation Commission's decision to continue ferry service between Anacortes and Vancouver Island is a tremendous victory for the citizens of Anacortes, the San Juan Islands, and the state of Washington.

I was able to get two public hearings on the economic impact of our state's only international ferry run in the House Trade & Economic Development Committee. Working together with local leaders, we were able to make the case that our entire state would lose out if the ferry service was eliminated. I would like to thank all the island residents who took the time to complete a comprehensive survey on ferry service; the results are inside. Your responses will be extremely helpful as I continue to pursue improvements and efficiencies in our ferry system.

One item is clear after sorting through all information, we need more ferry boats. Robbing one ferry run to better service another is not good management nor good for our communities.

### **What Can You Do Now?**

The answer to this question is simple — use the run. I recently traveled to Sydney, B.C. to participate in the Sister City celebration between Anacortes and Sydney. One of my daughters came with me. Along the way we saw porpoises, seals, and birds of all types. I am convinced that this run is one of the great undiscovered bargains in our area. For \$6.90 adult or \$3.45 child or senior each way, you can walk on at the following times:

Depart Anacortes @ 8 a.m. (Stop in Orcas)  
Arrive in Sydney @ 11 a.m.

Depart Anacortes @ 2 p.m. (Stop in Friday Harbor)  
Arrive in Sydney @ 5 p.m.

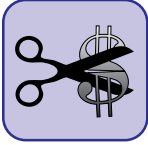
Depart Sydney @ noon (Stops in Friday Harbor & Lopez)  
Arrive in Anacortes @ 3 p.m.

Depart Sydney @ 6 p.m. (Stop in Friday Harbor)  
Arrive in Anacortes @ 9:10 p.m.

Spend the day in Sydney or Victoria (where they have excellent mass transit) and depart Sydney back to Anacortes for an excellent day trip. If you would like to check this ferry service out or want more information, please call the Anacortes Visitor's Information Center at (360) 293-3832 or Tourism Victoria at (250) 953-2033. Local residents are working hard to get more ridership on this run. I hope you can help them out!



## Representative **JEFF MORRIS**



### **Assisting Small Business**

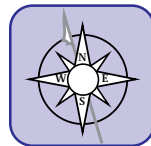
In our communities, small businesses are the backbone of the economy. Individual investment, hustle, and a business-friendly regulatory environment are key ingredients to success for entrepreneurs. Because so much of our livelihood depends on a strong core of small businesses, I supported concentrating tax reductions toward small businesses. One plan would exempt all new small businesses from the B&O tax for the first three years. A second plan would provide selected service-oriented small businesses a credit of up to \$3,000 against their B&O taxes. However, this approach of targeting tax relief to small business was rejected by the majority party.



### **Resolving Local Concerns**

There is a perception that all that lawmakers do is write laws. Actually, I find that I spend a significant amount of time negotiating between state bureaucrats and the constituents I represent. For example, I worked toward resolving two local disputes this year. With the first, I was able to get the Department of Natural Resources to start negotiating lower aquatic lands lease rates for the marina operated by Port of Friday Harbor. Without the lower rates all tenants at the marina will face at least double the rates according to port commissioners — hampering public access to public lands.

I was also able to intervene between the Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) and OPALCO. L&I had proposed a new inspection schedule to allow OPALCO to install load-shedding devices that will further conservation of electricity in the Islands. Without the change of heart at L&I the installation of these devices would have been too cost prohibitive for OPALCO to proceed. If you have trouble with a state agency please call me. We are not always able to resolve all problems but I am here to advocate on your behalf.



### **A Boost for Maritime Communities**

Maritime communities like Friday Harbor, Anacortes, LaConner and Bellingham stand to benefit from a new law I sponsored in the House of Representatives that permits out-of-state boaters to travel and dock in Washington for up to six months without paying steep excise taxes. Right now, pleasure boats registered in other states are prohibited from staying in Washington waters longer than 60 days. In many cases, local communities lose out on substantial amounts of money generated from slip rentals, tourism dollars, and other related revenues to neighboring communities in Canada.

I believe that allowing pleasure boats registered in other states to remain in Washington will result in a boost to our local economies through higher moorage revenue for our marinas, new jobs, and added tourism revenue for our shops and stores.



### **Wetlands Mitigation**

State agencies such as the Department of Ecology and the Department of Fish & Wildlife require mitigation plans to compensate for any negative impacts for the development of wetlands or along shorelines. The intent is to recreate habitat that is lost to development.

I co-sponsored legislation that would bring some common sense flexibility to the mitigation process, allowing mitigation where it would do the most good, while maintaining important environmental safeguards. The legislation was supported by our local ports because it would assist the Port of Skagit and the Port of Anacortes with current development plans that provide economic development and jobs.



### **Workforce Training**

Lawmakers severely cut back two successful programs that assist displaced workers during their time of need. The Timber Retraining Benefit program provides extended unemployment benefits for dislocated timber and salmon workers, and unemployed workers in rural communities dependent on those industries. Eligibility for this program was chopped by 65 percent from \$60 to \$22 million — eliminating hundreds of workers in Skagit and Whatcom Counties. Also, the Workforce Training Program, funded by unemployment insurance taxes, was reauthorized with a \$10 million cut.

# 1997 Session Report



*Rep. Morris addresses the House of Representatives on a property tax-relief measure.*

I fought hard to restore these two programs to current levels. We had restored Skagit County to full funding at one point in the legislative process but Senate Republicans refused to sign the conference support. This vital program for rural Washington state was supported by many local Chambers of Commerce and Community Colleges. Opposed were associations representing large corporations. You can see who lost.



## Business & Property Tax Relief

Making good on a promise made during the fiscal crisis of 1993, the Legislature rolled back an increase in the Business & Occupation Tax. Democrats and Republicans

worked together to provide tax-relief to service-oriented businesses like accountants, engineers, barbers, and architects. With regards to property tax cuts, I worked on a proposal outline in a special report mailed to you called the Homeowner's Property Tax Credit which would give virtually all homeowners in our state a \$205 break on their annual property tax bill. Unfortunately, majority Republicans rejected this plan and instead approved an across-the-board 4.7 percent property tax reduction for businesses and homeowners. Under this plan, the average homeowner would only receive a \$17 cut.

The majority also passed an additional plan that could potentially raise taxes for some wiping out the previous \$17 dollar reduction. I voted against the two plans because it was too little. I wanted

to see at least a \$100 dollars across the board reduction to all homeowners. In the end the majority sent its measures past the governor to the fall ballot. You will get a chance to voice your opinion directly in November.



## Welfare Reform

At long last, state lawmakers were given the freedom and opportunity by the federal government to reform our social safety net and remove burdensome rules and regulations. I strongly support Gov. Locke's plan called WorkFirst which focuses on work. The new system, which is now law, contains a 5-year benefit limit and requires able-bodied recipients to hold down a job.

Most important, it rewards responsible behavior with the tools necessary to gain self-sufficiency like affordable child care for single parents who work. I advocated for more funding for early learning and child care. We need to provide a ladder so people can climb off welfare. I hope we will visit this issue again so that we can provide more than a step ladder.

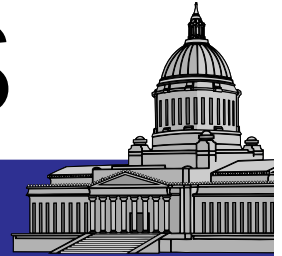


Representative

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# JEFF MORRIS

## 1997 Session Report



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July 1997

*Dear Friend,*

*Lawmakers adjourned on April 27, completing my first session as your state representative. This year marks the first time in several years that lawmakers concluded on time in 105 days. In my first session as your legislator my goal was to represent the needs and wishes of working families struggling to make ends meet. This report highlights legislation that specifically pertains to our district, as well as many of the major issues of the 1997 Legislative Session. It explains my accomplishments on your behalf as well as a few disappointments. My purpose is to serve you, so please feel free to contact me whenever you wish to share your views or to receive information on the Legislature.*

*Sincerely,*

  
Jeff Morris

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**Representative Jeff Morris**

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